

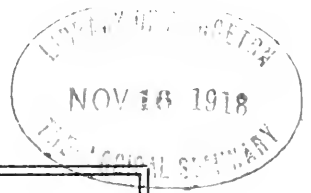
The French Protestant Church  
in the  
City of Charleston

"The Huguenot Church".

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The French Protestant church  
in the city of Charleston



THE FRENCH PROTESTANT CHURCH

IN THE CITY OF CHARLESTON

"THE HUGUENOT CHURCH"

A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE CHURCH

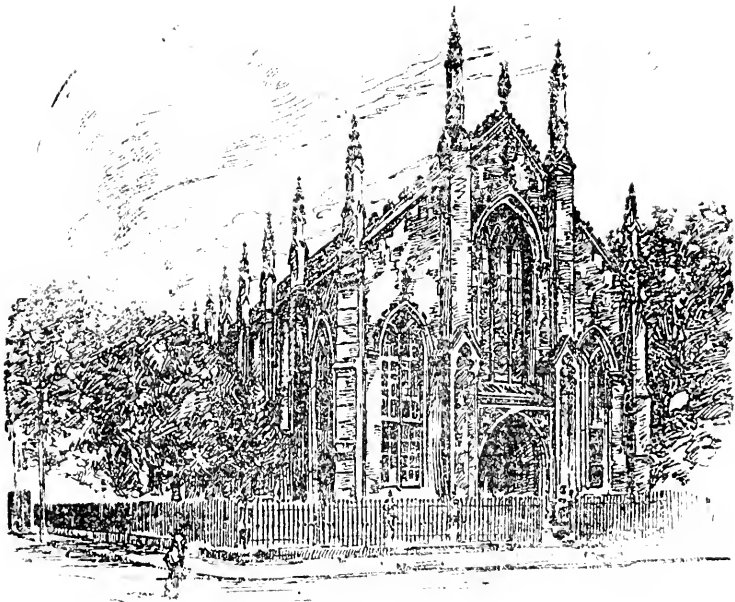
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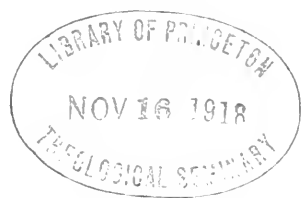
TWO ADDRESSES

DELIVERED ON THE

TWO HUNDRED AND TWENTY-FIFTH ANNIVERSARY OF  
THE FOUNDING OF THE CHURCH, APRIL FOUR-  
TEENTH, NINETEEN HUNDRED  
AND TWELVE







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## THE FRENCH PROTESTANT CHURCH

IN THE CITY OF CHARLESTON

### “THE HUGUENOT CHURCH”

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The congregation worshipping at the corner of Church and Queen Streets, in the City of Charleston, South Carolina, represents today, as it has done for perhaps a century, the only Huguenot Church in all America which continues its distinctive service. The adherents of this church had grown strong and self-sustaining by the year 1687. But, although we know that the Huguenots in the first few years of their residence in the Province of Carolina had established four, and probably five, churches between the Santee River and the coast, yet only this congregation held together beyond the middle of the eighteenth century; while at least two of the country churches resigned their separate existence soon after the year 1700.

The first colony on the Carolina coast was planted by Huguenots under Jean Ribault, in 1562. This settlement failed, but after the lapse of a hundred years, when Carolina had begun to fill up as an English Province, we again find Huguenots migrating, and they were, indeed, the first people to preach the Gospel in the country districts around Charleston.

But when an emigrant pastor died there was always difficulty in securing a successor, while the people had to meet the terrible ravages of a malarial climate, whose diseases they had not the means or knowledge to combat. The mortality

at Jamestown, on the Santee River, one of the principal settlements, was so great that it had soon to be abandoned. Then there were the troubles of new and untried conditions, with lack of roads and easy means of transportation, and the absence of many facilities of life.

The congregations had to care for a percentage of very poor members, and even those who had been rich in France had generally escaped with the loss of their estates. On the other hand, the Church Act of 1706, established the Church of England, giving it permanence and support from the public funds, and at the same time placing other religious bodies under some disabilities.

Episcopal ministers were sent out from England, and in order to attract the refugees, the English service was translated into French, and many pious families, availing themselves of church privileges which were thus rendered more regular and stable than their own, ultimately became affiliated with the Episcopal communion.

The absorption of the Carolina Huguenots was not different from the experience of their brethren elsewhere. Half a century ago, it was stated by a careful enquirer, that only two Huguenot Churches were then to be found in England, although so many thousands of exiled French had taken root there.

Notwithstanding the large migration of French protestants to Virginia and New York, and the considerable settlements made by them in New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Massachusetts and North Carolina, as early as 1836 the church in Charleston had the distinction of being the sole survivor in America.

But the church and its records have had a vicissitudinous history. Twice are its records



known to have been lost. In 1740 a conflagration visited Charleston, and though the church itself was not burnt, the archives, which were probably at some officer's home, were destroyed, leaving considerable breaks in our knowledge of the previous history of the organization.

Again, during the War between the States, when Charleston had become unsafe, a box of invaluable records, and the communion service were sent to Cheraw, in the interior, for safe-keeping, but, after the Federal army had visited the town, in 1865, no trace of the property could ever be obtained. This is published in the dim hope that it may be seen by some one who can aid in the discovery of the lost treasure.

On June 13, 1796, during what is called by old writers "a great fire" in Charleston, the French Church itself was blown up in an unsuccessful effort to arrest the flames, but the church books are not supposed to have been lost on that occasion.

Mr. Daniel Ravenel (1789-1873) had prepared a history of the church, supported by many valuable documents and publications, prior to the War between the States, but its publication was interrupted, and when he resumed the work after the War, so much had been lost, that he could make only a partial restoration. This post-bellum paper was published by the Huguenot Society of South Carolina in 1900, in Transactions No. 7.

It is practically certain that the first pastor of the Huguenots in Charleston was the Rev. Elias Prioleau, who had succeeded his father as pastor of a large flock in Pons, in Bretagne, where, during a short but heroic career, he and his congregation had been in constant peril. His church was torn down on April 15, 1685, in the

violent persecutions attendant upon the revocation of the Edict of Nantes, and he came to Carolina followed by a large portion of his people, and served the Charleston church until his death in the Fall of 1699. He seems for a time to have been assisted by Rev. Florent Philippe Trouillard, who subsequently removed to St. John's, Berkeley, to serve one or more of the country churches.

The form of government of the French church is Presbyterian, although the service is liturgical. Its confession is said to have been the work of Calvin himself, and was adopted by the first Synod in France, assembled at Paris in 1559, under the title "Confession de Foi, faite d'un commun accord par les Églises Reformees du Royaume de France." The liturgy is translated from that of the churches in the principalities of Neufchatel and Vallangin, from their second edition, published in 1737, with some minor adaptations to local needs.

The refugees brought with them the hymns of Clement Marot and Theodore de Beze, which in the lapse of time, have given way to, and have been supplemented by, books containing the more modern poetry of Christian worship and praise.

On the walls of the Huguenot Church, in Charleston, are a number of monuments of unusual beauty and historic value. The limits of this notice forbid quotations, but memorials of such families as Gourdin, Prioleau, Ravenel, Porcher, de Saussure, Huger, Mazyck, Lanier, all repay inspection, while more recently the corporation has allowed the insertion in the interior walls, under certain conditions, of plain marble stones, of fixed size, inscribed with only the name, location and date. Among

these stones we see—de la Plaine, Bacot, Maury, Gaillard, Meserole, Macon, Gabeau, Cazenove, L'Hommedieu, L'espenard, Serré, Marquand, Bayard, Boudouin, Marion, Laurens, Boudinot, Gibert, Robert, Fontaine, and others whose descendants have embraced this opportunity to memorialize their ancestors.

Many stones in the ancient burial-ground surrounding the church also have a story for the visitor.

Following the blowing up of the church during the fire of 1796, a new building was erected in the year 1800, but by that time many of the younger people, and others who might desire to unite, were unfamiliar with French and could not enjoy the services, so that attendance fell very low in the early part of the century—indeed, the church almost died. But in the year 1828 steps were taken for a permanent change to English, and Messrs. Elias Horry, Joseph Manigault, William Mazyck, Sr., George W. Cross, Daniel Ravenel, Thomas S. Grinke and William M. Frazer were appointed a committee to translate the liturgy from French to English.

The committee did its important work well and deliberately, and a final report having been submitted, the book containing the version of the confession, and the various parts of the service now in use, was first printed as a whole in 1836, and revised in 1853.

The church having been revived, it was decided to take down the building of the year 1800, and the beautiful structure, represented by the sketch at the head of this paper, was erected, and was dedicated on May 11, 1845.

The congregation was fortunate in securing the ministry of Rev. Charles W. Howard, and

with the newly translated liturgy, the attractive new building, and the drawing power of Mr. Howard's personality and preaching, such an impetus was given and so many accessions made to the roll, that serious consideration was given to the question of enlarging the church to accommodate the congregation.

From the completion of the church to the beginning of the War between the States was, however, only a period of sixteen years, and when the War ended, four years later, Charleston, with her churches, her banks, her schools, and all her cherished institutions had felt its withering touch.

There were then left very few persons of means whose devotion and liberality maintained the church, but these are all dead; other adherents have removed from the city, and the congregation has at last become so small that it cannot sustain the church. It is also unable adequately to support the venerable pastor, the Rev. Charles S. Vedder, D. D., LL. D., and still is it less able to supply him with an assistant so greatly needed now, when after forty-six years ministry he remains faithful to duty, and though stricken by blindness, conducts the entire service from memory.

The two hundred and twenty-fifth anniversary of the founding of the Huguenot Church on the present site was celebrated with much distinction on April 14, 1912, when able discourses were preached; in the morning by Dr. Vedder, and at night by the Rev. W. H. S. Demarest, D. D., LL. D., President of Rutgers College, New Brunswick, New Jersey, himself of Huguenot name and lineage.

The large attendance at both of these services would lead the visitor to believe that there must

be interest enough in Charleston for the abundant support of the church, and with outside encouragement there is a field for hope of usefulness. When the present edifice was opened in 1845, there were but seventeen persons who would definitely unite and pledge themselves to attend. Therefore, this sketch is sent out for the information of all who wish to know the true condition of the church, and who are interested in its preservation. It goes forth with mingled feelings of pride and humiliation. Pride in the heritage and history of the church, humiliation that aid is asked to preserve it. But so widespread has been the kindly expression of interest, and so generous the attitude of some of its outside friends, that its officers cannot justify themselves in allowing this church to perish without inviting co-operation from all interested in its preservation, embracing workers and leaders in every branch of thought and activity who look back with pride to Huguenot forbears. The historical appeal is strong enough, when we remember that the first child born in New York City was Jean Vigne, and the first in Albany, New York, was Sarah Rappelyea, children of Huguenot parents, and that in the year 1610 one-fourth of the population of New York City was Huguenot: and when we assemble before the mind the noble tributes to the Huguenot character and its contribution to American life, by George Bancroft, John Esten Cooke, and the host of historical and religious writers.

But the historical appeal alone would not justify the keeping open of a house dedicated to God. If it awakens any holy religious sentiment, any reverence for a faith consecrated by suffering, any tenderness for forefathers who sacri-

ficed home, country, fortune, and even life for the sake of principle; and if we can also believe that in the twentieth century this little temple may have a work to do, then let these words fall on open ears.

Let us close with the benediction used by the soldiers at the siege of La Rochelle and called the "Huguenot Benediction":—

"The love of our good God and Father, the grace, peace and favor of our Lord, Jesus Christ, through the communion of His Holy Spirit, rest upon us and all His church forever. Amen."



AT the annual meeting of the Corporation of The French Protestant Church, in the City of Charleston, held January 8th, 1912, the following resolutions were offered:

"While we do not know the exact date of the establishing of the Huguenot Church in the City of Charleston, still we have documentary evidence of its existence in 1687.

Therefore; be it resolved, that, this being the two hundred and twenty-fifth anniversary of its recorded existence, a celebration be made with befitting services.

Be it further resolved, that a committee be appointed by the chair to make the necessary arrangements for this celebration."

These resolutions were unanimously adopted and the chairman appointed the following committee: Mr. Daniel Ravenel, Chairman; Rev. Dr. C. S. Vedder, Mr. H. E. Ravenel, Mr. J. R. P. Ravenel, Mr. F. G. Ravenel and Mr. Isaac Hammond.

A meeting of the congregation was held at a later date in the Huguenot Church. At this meeting the congregation unanimously expressed their approval regarding the celebration. It was suggested that four ladies of the congregation be added to the General Committee. The Chairman appointed Mrs. A. A. Palmer, Miss C. P. Ravenel, Mrs. Philip Chazal and Miss Lena Logan.

The orator chosen for the occasion was the Rev. W. H. S. Demarest, D. D., LL. D., President of Rutgers College, New Brunswick, New Jersey, a devoted descendant of his Huguenot forbears.

Letters and telegrams of congratulation from all parts of the world were received by Dr. Vedder and the Committee.

to that God, who, through tribulation and loss of all else, brought them to this land of religious liberty. Of those Huguenots, who settled outside of Charles Town, we have contemporary proof of the purity of their lives and the harmony in which they dwelt.

Lawson, the Surveyor-general of North Carolina, at that time visited one of these colonies, and his description is that of a people among whom "the welfare of all was the care of each." A simple incident has come down to us of a resident of one of these colonies who had gone in his boat to Charles Town, and whose delayed return was a matter of great anxiety to his friends and co-religionists. They feared that something had happened to him. When the congregation assembled on the Lord's Day morning, the pastor, who from the pulpit could see down to the shore, suddenly paused in his sermon and cried; "There is Monsieur Gendron," and the pastor, followed by the whole congregation, adjourned the services, and went to the shore to welcome their brother.

But long before these Huguenots had scattered to other parts of America, there were Huguenot settlements in Massachusetts, New York and Virginia. Among the passengers by the "Mayflower," which landed in Plymouth, in 1620, was Priscilla; the Priscilla of romance and poetry, the typical Puritan maiden, and her father, William Molines.

In New York City as early as perhaps 1610, the Huguenots constituted one-fourth of the population of the city. They had their church within the walls of the fortress. That church continued until 1707, when it became absorbed in the Episcopal Church. Peter Stuyvesant, Governor of New York, married Judith Bayard,



a Huguenot; and Mivuit, Lieutenant-Governor, was a Huguenot.

In Virginia the colony of Huguenots was formed, of whom John Esten Cooke, the historian, says, they diffused an element of lofty character throughout all the community in which they lived. Everywhere the Huguenot secured a position of prominence all out of proportion to their numbers.

John Jay was the first Chief Justice of the United States, and Elias Boudinot the first President of the American Bible Society.

The part which South Carolina had in giving great names to American history is found in the fact that Henry Laurens was the first President of the Continental Congress. His son, John Laurens, the idol of the American Army, received the sword of Lord Cornwallis at Yorktown, while Henry Laurens, his father, was prisoner in the Tower of London, of which Lord Cornwallis was titular lieutenant.

General Francis Marion, with his lieutenant, Elias Horry, and their faithful partisans, made possible the surrender of the British arms and the failure of the British cause at Yorktown. Gabriel Manigault loaned to the Continental Congress \$220,000. All of these were Huguenots.

This present church edifice in Charleston is the only one which survives, whilst all its sister churches in the country were absorbed by the established Church of England. It continued its autonomy amid many difficulties and disabilities. Four churches, successively, stood on the spot whereon we now stand. Owing to the fact that pastors could only be secured from abroad, the services of the church were often interrupted and the sanctuary unoccupied. During this time many of its members found place in other

churches, where their descendants are prominent today. The present church building was erected in 1845.

The liturgy of the Church was that of the Swiss churches of Neufchatel and Valangin, which was translated, together with the "Confession of Faith," by a committee of eminent gentlemen. The trial service was held, and the liturgy was so approved that it has ever since been used. The government of the Church is by a bench of elders. The spirit of the Church is wholly evangelical.

The present church is a center of great interest to tourists visiting Charleston, and they cannot understand why this historic sanctuary lacks so much of that sympathy which ought to be assured; but those who remain faithful to its traditions are proud and happy in their attachment to the church of their fathers. The Church continues isolated, not from any lack of unity and sympathy with other churches, but because its merger in any other ecclesiastical organization would be at the expense of its memorial or monumental character.

At the beginning of the French Revolution of 1848, with which Charleston was in the deepest sympathy, a procession was formed, at the head of which were all the dignitaries of State, and the French Consul at Charleston. As it passed this edifice, the procession halted, the French Consul dipped the flag of France, and all uncovered before this sacred fane; the procession passed to St. Philip's Church, where the oration was delivered by the pastor of the Huguenot Church. Facts like these are of interest on an occasion like the present.

A recent writer, whose work of fiction has its scene in Charleston and whose book has excited

great interest, speaks of the memories which this church enshrines. He speaks of other churches, and then says of the French Church, that it is: "The one of all these that holds the most precious flame, the purest light; which treasures the holy fires which came from France. It was for liberty of soul, to lift their ardent and exalted prayer to God, as their own conscience bade them, and not as any man dictated, that those French colonists sought the New World. No Puritan splendor of independence and indomitable courage outshines theirs. They preached a word as burning as any that Plymouth or Salem ever heard. They were but a handful, yet so fecund was their marvelous zeal that they became the spiritual leaven of their whole community. They are less known than Plymouth or Salem, because men of action rather than men of letters have sprung from the loins of the South. They stand a beautiful beacon shining upon the coast of our early history."

There is a feature of the spirit of the Huguenots, who accepted banishment from their own land, which ought not to be unmentioned. It was the love they still held for the land that cast them out. An admired American poetess, Mrs. Sigourney, on visiting the ruins of a Huguenot Church in Massachusetts, was shown a vine which the French Protestants had brought with them to Oxford, where a monument now stands to commemorate the Huguenot settlement at that place. Mrs. Sigourney apostrophizes this memento of the patriotic love of the exiled sons of France.

“Green vine, who mantlest in thy fresh embrace  
Yon old grey rock,  
I hear that thou, with them, didst brave the ocean surge!  
Hast thou no tale for me?  
Drank thy germ the dews of Languedoc?  
Or slow uncoiled thine infant fibre in  
The fruitful moulds of smiling Rousillon?  
Or didst thou shrink from the harsh tread of martial men,  
Brother fighting with brother unto death in La Rochelle?  
Hast thou no tale for me?”

Yes, it had a “tale” for all! A “tale” that told of the unalterable love for the mother-land, which had denied them every right of conscience, life and liberty—an unchangeable love which reproduced in the new world the beloved names of the homes from which they had been banished in the old.

Our church contains tablets to prominent names among the original emigrants, and more than fifty smaller tablets to eminent Huguenots throughout the land. There is one beautiful stained window, the history of which will be preserved. Some years ago the pastor of the church received a letter from the Hon. Elihu B. Washburne asking how he could commemorate in our church his wife, who was a grand-daughter of General Gratiot, of General Marion's force. Mr. Washburne had been Secretary of State of the United States, and was our ambassador to Paris during the horrors of the Commune. He was told that the walls were already covered with tablets, but that place could be made for a stained window. He replied by securing such a window and having it erected, but before it could be placed in position Mr. Washburne himself had died.

I am asked to speak something with regard to my pastorate in the Church. I do this less

reluctantly, because, what shall be said will pertain more to the Church than to myself. When, forty-six years ago, the present pastorate was instituted, the South was in the throes of what is known as Reconstruction, when this grand old State was harried throughout all its extent by organized brigandage. In this ordeal, Charleston was, perhaps, the principal sufferer. In common, with most of the churches of the city, our church was largely depleted of its members, and deprived of its means of support, but those who remained were unfaltering in their determination to maintain the integrity of the endeared sanctuary of their pious ancestors.

In his opening sermon, the pastor took as his text, the question of St. Peter to Cornelius, "I ask therefore to what intent thou hast sent for me?" The answer, which he gave to the question then, is the same as he has sought to give through all the years since; namely, to preach Christ crucified. He remembers, so vividly, the congregation over which he first looked on that far-off day, that it requires no serious effort of th imagination to re-people these pews with those who then occupied them, and who have passed to the life beyond. He has baptized three generations, and received them into the communion of the Church.

While life lasts with him it will retain endeared memories of saintly women and noble men who then greeted him.

Of the pastorate who were in charge of Charleston churches forty-six years ago, one survives, Rev. Dr. John T. Wightman, of Baltimore, Maryland, who though in his eighty-seventh year, continues to preach the same Gospel which he proclaimed and exemplified here. All the others have passed away. The Rev. Dr. John

Forrest, Rev. Paul Trapier Keith, Dr. William C. Dana, Dr., afterwards Bishop, W. B. W. Howe, Dr. Thomas Smythe, Dr. Charles Cotesworth Pinckney, Dr. John L. Girardeau, Dr. A. Toomer Porter, the revered and honored Dr. John Bachman, Dr. William S. Bowman, Dr. Edwin T. Winkler, the ideal Seaman's Chaplain William B. Yates, Dr. A. W. Marshall. Dr. E. J. Meynardie, and others of the Methodist Church, earnest and faithful men. And among those, whose memory is still like ointment poured forth, was Christopher Philip Gadsden, beloved Rector of St. Luke's. Bishop Lynch then presided over the Roman Catholic Church in South Carolina, to be followed by my good and dear friend, Harry Pinckney Northrop.

Although this Church has been always exclusive in its character, and measurably isolated in its relation to other ecclesiastical bodies, it has abounded in works of beneficence and in types of exalted character. The senior elder of this Church, when the present pastorate was formed was one of whom Hugh Swinton Legare said: "Daniel Ravenel, ten such men would save a city." One of the most beautiful creations of fiction is Charles Dickens' protraiture of the Cheeryble brothers. It was left to this church to make that ideal real in the character of the two brothers, Henry and Robert Gourdin. Time would fail to tell of what this church has done in elevating and exemplifying nobility of life and spirit. But one instance more cannot be withheld. When this church was nearly shaken down by the earthquake, and its means

of restoration apparently beyond reach, at a meeting of the elders, to consult as to what should be done, one of their number, a graduate of West Point, who had served in three wars, and was as truly a Soldier of the Cross, as he had been of the country, proposed that we should roof over the church, and hold our services in the partially destroyed edifice as our Huguenot fathers had done in the caves and fastnesses of France. Fortunately, the necessity to do this was avoided, by the generous munificence of Mr. Charles Lanier, of New York City, who furnished the means by which the church edifice was rehabilitated. It was a member of this church and her sister, who, almost unaided, wrought, what, to me, was the most beautiful example of patriotic devotion elicited in the War between the States; namely, the removal of the Carolina dead, who fell at Gettysburg, from their stranger graves to be re-interred with solemn ceremony in our own Magnolia Cemetery, where each year, patriotic love wreathes their graves with tribute flowers. It was in this church and by the same sisters that the Home for Mothers, Widows and Daughters of Confederate Soldiers was established, to send forth, as it has, fifteen hundred of its pupils, prepared to meet and overcome the difficulties which confronted life after the desolation wrought by the War. It was from this church, and the same devoted sisters that the funds raised before the War for the beautiful Calhoun monument were preserved amid all dangers and difficulties. It is to this church, that our city owes the beautiful and beneficent ministry of the district nurse. It was to this

church, that the Huguenot Society of South Carolina was first organized, and it is to the Huguenots of that early day that we are to refer the founding of the South Carolina Society. But I may not continue this rehearsal without wearying you. May I conclude with some lines written by myself, for a like occasion in my native church, in explanation of the propriety and value and need of memorial occasions.

Oh guardian spirit of days long gone,  
Whose fadeless scroll behooves all days to read,  
Who wait'st unseen with wayward souls to plead;  
For lives of those of old, in word and deed,  
Lift high the veil o'er mortal vision thrown  
That vanished years may live again, again be known,  
And our dead fathers' virtues name our own.



# COMMEMORATIVE ADDRESS

TWO HUNDRED AND TWENTY-FIFTH ANNIVERSARY OF  
THE FOUNDING OF THE FRENCH PROTESTANT  
CHURCH IN THE CITY OF CHARLESTON.  
"THE HUGUENOT CHURCH"

REV. W. H. S. DEMAREST, D. D., LL. D.

"These all having received a good report through faith, received not the promise, God having provided some better thing for us that they without us should not be made perfect."

This word of Scripture so summarily completing the splendid story of the Old Testament heroes of faith belongs as well, we believe without irreverence, to the Huguenot heroes of long after generations. The spirit, experience and triumph, the incompleteness and the surely coming fulfillment, are essentially the same in Bible times and other ages of the onward march of the Kingdom of God. Today, everywhere, there are men and women and children, stewards of the oracles and grace of God just as surely as were prophets and apostles, and somewhere they are suffering, conquering and waiting for faith's sake just as surely as did the many unnamed heroes and martyrs enshrined in this great panegyric to the Hebrews.

In the long and distinguished succession of those who have received and transmitted the traditions of the Church of Christ through good report and evil report none, perhaps, deserve enduring fame and filial remembrance more than the sons and daughters of France of the days and after-days of the Reformation. To this generation as to every generation there falls the duty and the privilege of honoring the many

groups of leaders in the world-movement of the Gospel, and of deriving anew from them the direction and inspiration which they have bequeathed their descendants. To some comes such call to ever new remembrance of the Puritan and Pilgrim; to some, of the Quaker; to some, of the Dutchman; to some, of the Presbyterian, the Scotch-Irish; to some, of the Englishman, the Anglican or Wesleyan. To you and to me, with a true body of brethren, falls the honor of ever-new exalting of the Huguenot and ever-new devoting of our lives to his ideals and undertakings.

Your claim to this lineal, filial honor seems, one might say, supreme. For here in Charleston was the first Huguenot settlement on these Western shores and here you have kept alive, and with its distinctive characteristics; the one French Reformed Church in this Western Republic. You dwell in a chief place of the noble tradition and in a rare continuance of the original life. Nor is my claim small to a part in this honorable service. The early Huguenot planting in this country in which I have family pride was an enduring one. David des Marest, leader of a little band of fellow-churchmen, came to this new land in 1663; he lived a little while on Staten Island, and a little while on Manhattan Island; and then he occupied a patent between the Hudson and the Hackensack Rivers about fifteen miles from Manhattan in New Jersey. His three sons established their homes on the several portions of the patent, and at the central home of the three my father was born, the line unbroken there for eight generations. Near Hackensack, before there was a Dutch Reformed Church nearer than that in New York and that at Bergen, New Jersey,

fifteen miles away, the original David des Marest and his sons and their few fellow-families founded their French Reformed Church. It could not last long with its small French constituency in the midst of the larger Dutch population, and especially when a little later the Dutch Church was established close by. So the French Church passed, merged in the Dutch. And the French blood was with the passing generations more and more thinly mixed with the Dutch blood. And with many descendants of today I own allegiance to the Dutch Reformed Church and to the Holland Society. But the French name has endured; it still stays on the old patent; it has gone widespread throughout our land; and the French strain is not all disappeared; and we strive to keep in spirit and life something of the Huguenot type and quality which, if it be in us, makes us in so far worthy of the name we bear and the faith we profess.

My first word, then, tonight is In Memoriam. You call this a commemorative sermon. Your minister has told the story of this church, of the men who founded and preserved it. I could not deal with that; I have not known it; nor should I attempt to repeat or add to the story if I could. But I may commemorate the multitude of those who through long time and in many lands, and widely in our own land, under the same banner of fatherland and church, endured hardness and kept the faith. It may well be said of them that they received a good report. For even in their own generation, and increasingly through the centuries since, the thought of men has given the Huguenot peculiar fame and admiration. It has been a good report through faith for it was their faith that wrought out the life and works which deserved

such good report. It was no worldly ambition, it was no zeal for good by withdrawal from the world, it was not devotion to a human high ideal, it was not a purpose of service of fellowmen; it was faith in God, in Jesus Christ, and in the Scriptures. Their good report through faith, their fame, through all time, is born of their sufferings, their endurance, their martyrdom. The story of sacrifice, of suffering for truth's sake, of heroic stand for principle, of death chosen rather than surrender, is the story that masters men's minds and hearts and is written most vividly in the annals of a nation or of the world. The heroes whom the world honors are supremely those who by faith fighting or waiting for the substance of things hoped for remain to the last only heirs of the promise—the thing itself, the rest, the peace, the freedom, the homeland, reserved for others who come after. These are they whom we call great, they who, in God's name, were lifting the valleys and leveling the hills of the hard highway of the marching souls of men, that those who came after might easily enter into the promised land, and find it a land of milk and honey. So when God has provided the better thing for us, the liberty and the prosperity, we are unerringly taught that they are not made perfect without us, that the triumph which has so surely come was necessary to complete their conflict, and that it ministers forever to their satisfying after the travail of their soul. We are unerringly taught that in a sense they are not complete save as we give them the remembrance and the honor they deserve, as we enshrine them in the memory and life of each generation, as we nurture in our souls the virtue of grateful understanding, as we carry out the work they

so nobly sustained, as we show ourselves of the same mould and spirit. The noblest monument of worthy ancestors is noble emulation by their descendants.

It is a long, sad story, all shot through with the splendid light of unquenched faith and far-reaching hope. It takes days and it takes volumes to weave together the threads of that strange story running out from the valleys and the towns of fair France, to picture the scenes, to rehearse the names. We gather up the history of that garden land, when it knew not the day of its visitation, in one vast panorama. The stir of Reformation thought and spirit; the turning of men, families and communities to the new worship and the open Word; the challenge by an entrenched church and by a despotic throne; the resistance of brave and devoted life; sword and fire; cruelty, torture, exile, the waste of fields and homes; the pitiless hurt of children, the satanic dishonor of women, the lavish murder of men; the faith, zeal and courage of God's people; the strong voice of unflinching confession; the flight into mountain fastnesses; the far-hidden assembly of those who sang and prayed and listened to the pure preaching of the Gospel; the journey into foreign and far distant lands; the seeming triumph of persecution; the seeming overthrow of the Reformation in France; yet the victory of a faith that overcomes the world; and the bequest of triumphant life to all the generations since.

I want to speak to you of two or three points where the Huguenot has commanded place in history and life.

1. The National Life; the Depleting of France and the Enriching of America.

Never perhaps has any land more plainly or more largely depleted its life by its own wilful waste than France. A noble race, it cut out by destruction or exile its noblest part and debased its less fine remainder by giving rein to base, fierce passion. The tens of thousands on tens of thousands who went out from their homes, from their fertile fields, from their throbbing industries, depleting the population, still more impoverished the virile, noble quality of the nation. For it was the best blood of France that thus poured itself out, literally to lose itself on the soil of the fatherland or to pulse abundantly in an alien, albeit a friendly land. They were ministers and statesmen, noblemen and artisans, merchants and manufacturers. Rank and wealth were common among them. They were pioneers and promoters of the greatest material activities of the land. They were ardent friends and patrons of education. They were leaders in serious concern for the public welfare and national prestige. They were men of vision, ideals, enthusiasm. They were lovers of their country, patriots of the finest grain. In them lay largely the secret of well-filled treasury, of a noble common life, and of the national spirit. It was no small drain upon the nation's vitality when its very arteries were opened and this its richest blood streamed over the borders and across the seas to mingle with other streams in new commonwealths. Nor did the army of exiles go, sorrowful alone for the loss of homes and fortunes, of friends and even families, perhaps, but keenly sorrowful too that they were torn from a land they loved, from a national allegiance precious to them to the last, sorrowful that a land and throne that had nurtured them had turned upon them in bitter strife, and cruel

injustice, sorrowful that fair France could give itself to bigotry, hate and torture. France reaped the harvest in the wrong and irreligion that grew apace, as well as in the lessened product of the field and of the factory, in the unbelief and reign of terror that blackly stained her life in years long after, in the enduring defects of an impeded and depleted civilization.

But the happier side of the picture is this—the enriching of nations elsewhere into which the Huguenots came with all their genius for national life. Into the countries of the old world round about they went, to Switzerland, Germany, Holland, England; with that we have not to do, save as many made Holland or England but stopping-place en-route to America. It is our own national life we have in mind. It is a surprise to some to learn how widespread were the Huguenot pioneers upon these shores. Here in South Carolina; many in Pennsylvania; in New Jersey on the Hackensack; in New York at New Rochelle and New Paltz; in Rhode Island; in Massachusetts. Here in larger number, there in smaller, they almost everywhere by a community or a personality touched upon and reached into the forming national life. With the Puritan in New England, with the Dutch in New York, with the German in Pennsylvania, with the Scotch-Irish here and there, they made common cause and entered a composite blood. Nor was it in any instance a strain to be readily lost or dissipated or to prove of less moment than the other. Far more than in proportion to their number did their life tell upon the new American life. It was needed to soften the austerity of the Puritan, to enliven the steadiness of the Dutchman and the German, to broaden the devotion of the Scotch-Irish, to

deepen the impetuosity of the Anglican and the Cavalier. Beyond the well known leaders in the pioneer groups there were those in the period of forming independence. Laurens and Faneuil and Boudinot and Jay and Hamilton. Honoring as we do the elements other than ours, and those others in which we have a part, we are impressed with the singularly unprejudiced place given the Huguenot. With all the virtues of the other races there always urges in the mind of casual observer or of more serious student the defect which invites ridicule or rebuke. But somehow of the Huguenot we hear only the good. Nothing seems to rise out of the past to discourage his lovers or admirers; the destructive criticism, which seeks, and often successfully, to shatter our happy notions of men and events behind us, scarce challenges the Huguenot. Nowhere, I am sure, in the early days of our land do we find the Huguenot a disturbance or a detriment; nowhere in the beginning statesmanship do we find him perverse, narrow or superficial; in the large life of today we like to think that his blood-bequest is still one of the strong, sweet and saving elements in our national character. In the cultivating of a virgin soil, in the every day making of a new home, in the actual welding of varied people into a new community we find him everywhere wise, ready and forceful. The liberty which is the keystone of our institutions was a passion of his soul out of the price for it which he had paid. The righteousness which exalts a nation had in him an impregnable stronghold. The education which claimed its immediate and enduring place beside the hall of law and justice and beside the sanctuary with God's Word, found in him a first creator and a generous support. The forming of



the constitution or of the institutions of the infant nation could not be wise or effectual without the idealism, the charity, the poise of the elect Frenchman, the Huguenot. And as the life of a nation is more than its organic law or its corporate institutions, rather the life of the people, his rare quality was rich asset indeed for the nation that hoped, and still hopes, to be the crowning civilization of the world. And as the nation today is facing important and difficult problems, challenged by ventures impetuous and foolish or shrewd and unscrupulous, we covet the clear wisdom, the brave readiness, the high principles, and excellent poise of this pioneer stock.

## 2. The Forsaking and the Sustaining of a Church, of Religion.

We are reminded that the cause beneath this whole story is religion and devotion to it. The motive which started a Huguenot people, that separated them from their fellow-countrymen, was the fear of God, the call of faith. Their activity in factions of the court or on the field of battle was but accessory to this—neither political ambition nor the lust of war was the ruling force. As the rise of the Dutch Republic was an uprising of true religion, so was the fall of a united France. The zeal of the Reformation rent the nation and made a new Frenchman over against the old. Religion was worth living for, worth fighting for, worth dying for; its call was rightly to forsake husband or wife, lands, houses, and fatherland. The Huguenot was a protestant—a protestant against a church gone wrong, against error in doctrine and life, against the slavery of the mind and of the conscience. His birth as a Huguenot was his claim to believe as he must and worship as he pleased. To him

the essence of religion was not the form of worship or of the Church; it was the soul's relation to its God, the setting of the heart on Him Who is above; that was not subject to any other man, be he priest or pope. Yet with religion thus essentially within he was supremely zealous for the united, outward worship of God's people. Those who held the faith must not forsake the assembling of themselves together; it was their right to assemble according to the dictates of their conscience; denied that right, they must gather in the secret chamber, in mountain valleys, or caves of the earth. Religion with them meant a newly opened Bible, a Bible rightly and frankly interpreted, a Bible in their own language, a Bible in their own hands—a proclaiming of the truth which makes men free, of the Gospel which saves the lost. Nor did their spiritual principle of religion or free principle of worship mean enmity to or neglect of church organization. Gladly would they have honored and remained in the old organization had it permitted them and had it provided that which their consciences did not abhor and resist. They were not anxious to depart from the ancient boundaries, thought of no such thing at first. But, offended by the mother church, unable to secure the things they might approve, driven out by official decrees and the weapons of war, they coveted, and counted essential, an organized church which should direct their order of worship and maintain a reasonable and just government of religious affairs. Thus arose the Reformed Church of France. It was natural that, with their genius for liberty and their new grasp of the Scriptures, the Presbyterian government should have been chosen. Doctrinal standards and dignified liturgy followed, of course; formal

congregations and fixed sanctuaries. But the organization, the ministry, must be purged of faults, of crimes. The Huguenot was a protestant against evil in high places, against common sins in sacred things, against a priesthood given to extortion or uncleanness, against the perverting of church power to personal gain or self-indulgence. The hands must be clean that touched the holy vessels, the life must be pure that would speak the oracles of God or lead God's servants to His holy hill. Nor might even clean hands and a pure heart dare stand between as mediator, only Jesus Christ, when man would find acceptance with his God and win salvation in the only way, by faith in Him.

As the Huguenots came to this land, they brought this unquenchable ardor of the faith. They brought their church and their minister; they brought their pureness of the Gospel and their cleanness of life; they brought their devotion to the Word and their spirit of sacrifice. They were not so many or so centrally located that their racial assemblies could endure or ought to have endured. But swiftly as their language passed and their life spread out, they entered into any near-by church of the Reformed. The church was the heart of the social and civic life; the Bible was the man of their counsel and guide of their life; the minister was the adviser and patron of all their local and personal affairs; religion was their vital breath. My own ancestors for years on Sundays travelled their fifteen miles from Hackensack to Bergen to worship in spirit and in truth; at New Paltz, New York, the settlement of Beviers and Du Boises and their well-known Huguenot fellow-patentees, the church records pass from French to Dutch to English, the language changing, the religion

never changing, the worshipping assembly and the membership roll the very life of the developing American people. They had in their fair, free land the priceless privilege denied them in their fatherland, for which they had been willing to sacrifice all they possessed and life itself. They were not singular in this respect, of course; largely our pioneer peoples were those of like devotion to faith and church, of like readiness to pay the price, and some of them of like suffering and deprivation. The voice of the new American life was thus of no uncertain sound. The years have passed and with them have passed in some measure this spirit of supreme devotion to religion and the outward signs and exercises of it. Later peoples of alien sort have played their part in changing the standards and reducing the habits of religious life. But it is unfair and futile to charge all the change to their account. Straight descendants of the Puritan, the Quaker, the Dutchman, the Huguenot are conspicuous enough in the host of those who count the Church and the Word and the Lord's Day and salvation by faith a very little thing. Perhaps they defend the new aspect of things, their new attitude; say that it is the right standpoint of the age, the position properly advanced from the earlier and more primitive idea and habit of a century or three centuries ago. I cannot feel it so. I cannot but feel that the great religious principles of that earlier time were enduringly right. I can only feel that departure from them is a decadence of life and of values which, if continued, must in a few years show unfortunate issues which we as yet scarcely discern. And the truth comes home that what we do not have to pay or sacrifice for we value less. All this came to us without

slightest cost in money, toil or blood—the Church, the Word, the Lord's Day, the faith. So we count things little which the fathers thought great riches. I have wondered whether, if an alien force should ride into our land, our cities, our villages, forbidding us the privileges of religion, men who now ignore them would not rise in new spirit to defend them with their very lives. It does seem strange that any man glorying in the Huguenot descent could with uplifted head and open life cast aside the very things which made the Huguenot what he was and which are the citadels of our pride as his descendants. Everywhere there is yet the multitude who hold aloft the ancient banner of Church and faith. Let us be in the van.

3. The Making of the Man, the Gentleman and the Christian.

Speak as we may of a national life, speak as we may of a church life, we are only emphasizing that which is the final element of each, and that which is the one thing needful after all, the individual man, his quality, his character, his personality. The marvel of human life with its many races and its many millions of souls is the essential sameness of each with every other and at the same time the absolutely inevitable difference of each from every other. The life of races and of men, we believe, in the Providence and Kingdom of God, is going on toward the perfect society, and toward the perfect man. In the age of man's imperfectness a group, an individual, stands out here and there in nobler mould than others. The Hebrew race in the ancient world. These heroes of that race whom the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews eulogizes in our text. These men were the makers of the best national

life, their exile and death were the depleting of the chosen people of God yet the enriching of a far-flung life—and this because of what they were in themselves, because of the virtues and nobilities which made them a salt of the earth and a leaven of the world. These were they who would not yield their faith and sacred honor to the whim or the perversity of apostate king or priest or people, but who would ever renew and sustain the spark of true religion and of Jehovah's church in a crooked generation; and any spiritualness or righteousness of the Church in the wilderness or in the promised land simply throws into relief these rare lives. After all each man of us stands for himself and is judged for what he is. And we set before ourselves the ultimate ideal, not of vast attainments or vast achievements, but the man, the gentleman, the Christian. The Huguenot, with all his imperfection, stands out second to none, it seems to us, measured in terms of life and character. To commemorate him thus seems to be but the rehearsing of virtues commonplace enough, each in itself, yet a calling to remembrance worth while perhaps lest we forget the things that make life's strength and beauty in any age, in our own age. The sturdy qualities of manhood were his; industry, thrift and frugality. He led the earnest and modest and simple life—but withal not a life of dullness and monotony. He was a man of ambition and enterprise; one to forge his way ahead. He had the endurance, the courage, the high spirit to press on into the wider fields, larger activities, higher attainments. Nor did he lack the intelligence and skill to make good his ambition, courage and industry. In his veins was the blood of thinking men; a quick and virile brain

commanded his ready strength. Then, if we allow the scarce justified distinction between the man and the gentleman and permit the latter title to add something to what we have said of the man, we look at his refinement, at those graces of life which some may tend to disparage but which are such happy marks of highest manliness, graces which we so readily concede to the Frenchman but which only too often consist with grosser spirit within. The Huguenot had that gentleness which strictly means the gentleman, which is more than an adornment, an essential nobleness to which even the Scriptures call us—Be ye courteous. And with that quiet grace the vivacity that made his words and manners a stimulus of good. Then, once more, if we are to allow the scarce justified distinction between the gentleman and the Christian and permit the latter word to add something to what we have said of the gentleman, we look at his morality and piety—morality without which no man is a true gentleman, piety without which the man and the gentleman so unhappily tend to decay. Honoring the Huguenot, we tell his fidelity to every trust, his staunchness in every duty, his brave loyalty to principle. Pureness of life, holding the home sacred and society harmless, was acknowledged of him by his foes. To him the fear of the Lord was the beginning of wisdom and the keeping of His commandments the whole duty of man. He was a man of vision, the vision of Christ, and to it he was not disobedient.

Such manhood, such Christianity, speaks with vivid force to our own day and life. It calls us from idleness and extravagance; it calls us from rudeness and vulgarity; it calls us from laxness of home life and private morals, from

unfaithfulness to private and public trust, from forgetfulness of God and independence of Christ. The Huguenot stands before us, a man and a Christian, in heroic size, a personality that beckons us on to spirit and virtue and high endeavor like his own.













